

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is a Response to the Office Action mailed December 8, 2004, in which a three (3) month Shortened Statutory Period for Response has been set, due to expire March 8, 2005. Fifteen (15) claims, including four (4) independent claims, were paid for in the application. Claims 16 and 19 have been amended. Claims 23 and 24 have been added and depend from claim 19. Claim 17 has been canceled. No new matter has been added to the application. The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090. Claims 5, and 7-15 were previously canceled. Claims 1-4, 6, 16, and 18-24 are currently pending.

Allowance of Claims

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-4, 6, 16-18, and 20-22. A minor amendment has been made to claim 16 to correct an error in the claim.

Objection to the Oath/Declaration

The Examiner stated that the declaration is defective because one of the inventors did not date the declaration. The requirements for a properly submitted declaration are detailed in 37 CFR § 1.63. It is not a requirement that the inventor's signature be accompanied by a date. MPEP § 602.05 states that the Office will no longer require a newly executed oath or declaration where the date of execution has been omitted. Applicants submit that the declaration is not defective as filed and therefore respectfully request that the present objection be withdrawn.

Objection to the Drawing (re: Claim 17)

The Examiner objected to the drawings because the cap recited in claim 17 is not shown in the drawings. Applicants have canceled claim 17, thereby making the present objection moot.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection

The Examiner rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chobert, U.S. Patent No. 2,150,361. Claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 16, which has been allowed. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 19, as amended, is patentable over Chobert. Newly added claims 23 and 24, which depend from claim 19, are also allowable as a result of being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner timely allow all pending claims. Examiner Bochna is encouraged to contact Mr. Vershave by telephone to discuss the above and any other distinctions between the claims and the applied references, if desired. If the Examiner notes any informalities in the claims, he is encouraged to contact Mr. Vershave by telephone to expediently correct such informalities.

Respectfully submitted,

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